#### DISTRICT COURT

District court was created by Act 154 of 1968, to commence functioning January 1, 1969. These courts replaced justice of the peace courts and circuit court commissioners, as mandated by the Constitution of 1963. The act also abolished municipal and police courts, but contained provisions allowing certain municipalities to retain their municipal courts. Five municipal courts still exist. The city of Detroit was not affected by the District Court Act of 1968 and the common pleas court of Detroit continued to function until abolished by Act 438 of 1980.

On April 1, 2003, several changes in district court boundaries took effect. Alcona and Oscoda counties moved from the 82nd District to the 81st District; Crawford County moved from the 83rd District to the 87th District; Lake County moved from the 78th District to the 79th District; and Oceana County moved from the 79th District to the 78th District.

#### Jurisdiction

The district court has exclusive jurisdiction of all civil litigation up to \$25,000; all misdemeanors where potential punishment does not exceed 1 year in jail; and the arraignment, setting and acceptance of bail, and conduct of preliminary examinations in felony cases. The district court also handles garnishments as well as eviction proceedings, land contract and mortgage foreclosures, and other proceedings. Juries in district court are limited to 6 members. In civil cases, 5 of 6 jurors must agree on a verdict while in criminal cases verdicts must be unanimous. District court became a court of record in 1973 and a verbatim record is kept of most court proceedings. All appeals from district court decisions are made to the circuit court.

District judges may appoint magistrates. Magistrates may set bail and accept bond in criminal matters; accept guilty pleas; and sentence for many traffic, motor carrier, and snowmobile violations and dog, game, and marine law violations. The magistrate may also issue arrest and search warrants authorized by the prosecutor or municipal attorney. Attorney magistrates may hear small claims cases. Magistrates may, at the direction of the chief judge, perform other duties allowed by statute. Appeals from magistrate decisions are made to a district court judge for de novo review.

A small claims division for civil cases up to \$3,000 is provided for in district court. In these cases litigants agree to waive their right to a jury, rules of evidence, representation by a lawyer, and the right to appeal from the district judge's decision. Small claims cases may also be heard by attorney magistrates whose decisions become final if not appealed to a district judge within 7 days. If either party objects, the case will be heard by the general division of the district court. Traffic bureaus may also be set up in district court to handle traffic offenses.

District judges are elected on nonpartisan ballots for terms of 6 years. Qualifications are the same as for other judges. The legislature sets their salaries, which may be supplemented by local governments.

#### Caseload

In 2004, over 3.3 million cases were filed with the district court, 7.5 percent fewer than in 2003. 390,129 were non-traffic felony, non-traffic misdemeanor, and non-traffic civil infraction cases; over 2.0 million were traffic misdemeanor and traffic civil cases; 56,140 were drunk driving cases; 583,003 were civil, small claims, and summary proceedings; and 330,940 were parking tickets.

Non-traffic felony cases increased 4.3 percent to 81,535 in 2004. 65.3 percent of the felony cases disposed by the district court are either bound over to circuit court or transferred to another court.

Non-traffic misdemeanor cases decreased by 21.5 percent from 2003 to 2004 when 264,430 cases were filed. Although statute misdemeanor cases decreased during this time period, ordinance misdemeanor cases were the primary source of this reduction.

Misdemeanor traffic cases, excluding drunk driving, decreased from 2003 to 2004 by 139,174 cases or 32.0 percent. Over 1.1 million traffic ordinance civil infractions were filed in 2004. 6.5 percent fewer traffic statute civil infractions were filed.

For the first time since 1999, general civil cases and summary proceedings filed in district court decreased by 7.0 percent and 2.9 percent respectively.

## TRENDS IN DISTRICT COURT CRIMINAL FILINGS, 2000-2004

Case Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Felony	71,356	74,991	78,772	78,121	81,535
Misdemeanor	312,788	336,264	319,721	336,827	264,430
Civil Infraction	17,649	24,644	32,428	43,798	44,164
OWI Misdemeanor and Felony	63,687	60,795	60,572	59,788	56,140
Total	465,480	496,694	491,493	518,534	446,269

# TRENDS IN DISTRICT COURT CIVIL FILINGS, 2000-2004

Case Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
General Civil	185,710	213,486	264,061	298,802	277,855
Small Claims	98,173	105,971	104,208	101,680	93,935
Summary Proceedings	183,480	198,861	206,276	217,596	211,213
Total	467,363	518,318	574,545	618,078	583,003

### DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

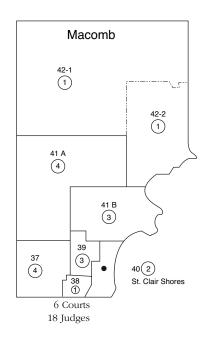


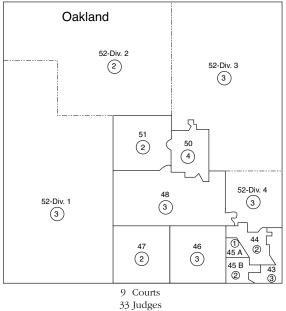
shown in detail on the following pages.

## 2005 Courts and Judgeships

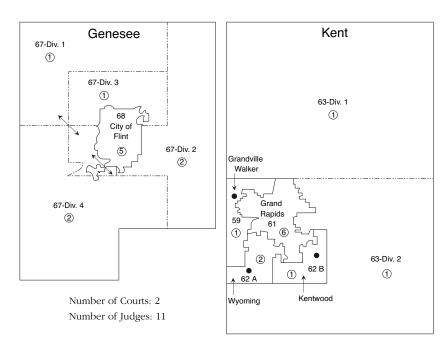
LEGEND	TOTALS
# - District Court	258 - Judgeships
# - Number of District Court Judgeships	105 - Number of District Courts

## DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS (Cont.)





### DISTRICT COURT — JUDICIAL DISTRICTS (Cont.)



Number of Courts: 5 Number of Judges: 12

